

Message Text

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44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 221255Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8155

INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 0988

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,BC, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SIR SERETSE KHAMA'S VISIT TO THE U.S.

REFERENCE: (A) GABORONE 0875, (B) GABORONE 0324

1. SUMMARY. DURING CALL MAY 21 PRESIDENT KHAMA COMMENTED ON (A) HIS DESIRE TO TOUR THE U.S., (B) RHODESIAN SITUATION, (C) SERIOUS IMPACT ON BOTSWANA FROM POSSIBLE LOSS OF RHODESIAN RAIL LINK, (D) NEED TO STRENGTHEN INTERNAL SECURITY, (E) REFUGEES, (F) TRANSKEI RECOGNITION ISSUE AND (G) FACTORS OPERATING AGAINST SWAPO PARTICIPATION IN NAMIBIA CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. I CALLED ON PRESIDENT SIR SERETSE KHAMA MAY 21 TO DISCUSS HIS PRIVATE VISIT TO THE U.S. JUNE 5-10. PRESIDENT NOTED HE HAD VISITED THE UNITED STATES SEVERAL TIMES BUT HAD NEVER HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL. HE HOPED HIS SCHEDULE WOULD SOMEDAY PERMIT HIM TO TOUR PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO. HE SEEMED TO BE MORE THAN HINTING FOR AN INVITATION TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL OR STATE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. I MADE NO SPECIFIC COMMENT ON THIS POINT.

3. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE SEVERAL POINTS IN THE SECRETARY' LUSAKA DECLARATION AND REVIEWED ACTIONS TAKEN OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS AS REFLECTED IN THE WIRELESS FILE AND OTHER
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MATERIAL. I EXPRESSED THE VIEW PRESIDENT WOULD FIND GREAT

ADMIRATION AND APPRECIATION IN THE UNITED STATES FOR HIS ROLE IN WORKING FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND HIS EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A STABLE, MULTIRACIAL, DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. I NOTED THAT A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION WAS NOW FOCUSED ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND PRESIDENT FORD AND OTHER LEADERS WILL BE INTERESTED IN KHAMA'S VIEWS PARTICULARLY THE IMPACT OF THE EVOLVING RHODESIA SITUATION ON BOTSWANA.

4. RHODESIA. PRESIDENT RECOGNIZED SECRETARY'S PROPOSALS ON RHODESIA AS A NEW DEPARTURE IN U.S. POLICY. HE HOPED THE BYRD AMENDMENT WOULD BE REPEALED. PRESIDENT EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT AMERICAN MERCENARIES IN RHODESIA. HE INQUIRED ABOUT RHODESIAN INFORMATION OFFICE IN WASHINGTON. I TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD WORK HARD FOR THE REPEAL OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT. THERE WERE SOME LEGAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RHODESIAN INFORMATION OFFICE; WE WERE LOOKING INTO THAT ISSUE. ALSO THE FBI SEEMS TO BE TIGHTENING UP ON MERCENARIES AS REFLECTED IN VARIOUS PRESS REPORTS.

5. RHODESIAN RAILWAY. PRESIDENT KHAMA INQUIRED ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE SEVENTH POINT OF THE SECRETARY'S LUSAKA DECLARATION ON BORDER CLOSURE. HE WILL WANT TO DISCUSS THE RHODESIAN RAILWAY SITUATION DURING HIS VISIT. THE PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED THAT BOTSWANA SUPPORTED PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE CLOSURE OF BOTSWANA'S BORDER WOULD HELP BRING DOWN SMITH AND POSSIBLY MINIMIZE BLOODSHED. HE SAID THE CLOSURE OF BOTSWANA'S BORDER AND TAKEOVER OF THE RHODESIA RAILWAY, HOWEVER, COULD CAUSE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL UPHEAVAL IN BOTSWANA, DISRUPT ITS ECONOMY, HARM EXISTING PRIVATE INVESTMENT, DISCOURAGE NEW INVESTMENT, AND INVOLVE HIGH CAPITAL AND OPERATIONG COSTS. WHILE THE GOB HAS NO CURRENT INTENTIONS OF CLOSING ITS BORDER, HE WONDERED ABOUT THE EXTENT OF U.S. SUPPORT IN THE EVENT BOTSWANA LOST THE RAIL LINK.

6. I TOLD THE PRESIDENT TTRGJBOKOABNT#IN THE LUSAKA DECLARATION WAS NOT TO PUT PRESSURE ON BOTSWANA BUT SIMPLY TO INDICATE OUR READINESS TO HELP IF THE GOB DECIDED TO CLOSE ITS BORDER OR THE RHODESIANS SEVERRED THE RAIL LINK. I ALSO NOTED THAT THE THRUST OF THE TEN POINTS SHOULD HAVE MADE IT ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENTIAL

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CLEAR TO SMITH THAT HE WILL FACE OUR UNRELENTING OPPOSITION AND THAT HIS REGIME CANNOT COUNT ON SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES. I STATED THAT THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM BOTSWANA WOULD FACE BY LOSS OF THE RAILWAY WAS SUCH AS TO REQUIRE A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EFFORT WHICH WE WOULD SUPPORT.

NOTE BY OC/T: (#) TEXT AS RECEIVED.

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